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Address by Mr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt. The Acting President (spoke in Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Mr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Morsi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, and to invite him to address the Assembly. President Morsi (spoke in Arabic):

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Vuk Jeremic and his friendly country on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. I wish him every success in his task. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the former President of the General Assembly, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, and the brotherly State of Qatar for their outstanding stewardship of the previous session. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for striving tirelessly to preserve the role of the Organization and enhance its effectiveness. I assure him of Egypt's support in all efforts extended for that purpose.

My presence here today to address the General Assembly has multiple significance. I am the first Egyptian civilian President elected democratically and freely, following a great peaceful revolution hailed by the entire world. The revolution enjoyed genuine legitimacy thanks to the efforts and will of all Egyptians, inside and outside of Egypt, and by the grace of God. Today, every Egyptian shares a sense of self-confidence that allows each of them to claim a higher moral and cultural ground.

We have taken several effective steps on the road towards establishing the modern State aspired to by all Egyptians - one that is in tune with the present, based on the rule of law, democracy and respect for human rights, a constitutional State that will not compromise the values firmly embedded in the souls of all Egyptians, a State that seeks justice, truth, freedom, dignity and social justice.

The Egyptian revolution that was founded on the legitimacy that I represent before the Assembly today was not the product of a fleeting moment, or a brief uprising. Nor was it the product of the winds of change of a certain spring or autumn. Rather, that revolution, and all the ones preceding it and following it in the region, were triggered by the long-term struggle of indigenous national movements seeking a life of pride and dignity for all citizens. It therefore reflects the wisdom of history and is a clear warning to those attempting to put their interests before those of their peoples.

We are therefore striving to realize a new vision of Egypt that will serve as a programme of action for the world and that will guide our cooperation with the international community in a spirit of equality and mutual respect through the promotion of non-intervention in the affairs of States and the implementation of international principles, agreements and instruments. Today we reiterate our commitment, particularly to the Charter of the United Nations, which Egypt took part in drafting.

From that perspective, we continue efforts to resolve problems and address their root causes, without relinquishing the principles of law or well-established values that, if compromised, could lead to grave international consequences if the rational and sincere among us choose not to pay heed.

The first issue that the global community must exert all efforts to resolve, on the basis of justice and dignity, is the Palestinian cause. Many decades have passed since the Palestinian people expressed their desire to regain their full rights and build their independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. Despite the continued struggle of the people via all legitimate means to attain their rights, and despite the acceptance by their representatives of the resolutions adopted by the international community as a basis for resolving problems, this issue of international legitimacy has to date, unfortunately, remained without a resolution to achieve the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people. And the resolutions agreed on the issue remain far from implementation.

The fruits of dignity and freedom must not remain out of reach of the brotherly Palestinian people. It is shameful that the free world has accepted, without regard to the justifications provided, the continued denial, by a member of the international community, of the rights of a nation that, for decades, has longed for independence. It is also disgraceful that settlement activities have continued in the Palestinian territories, along with the delay in implementing decisions of international legitimacy.

Proceeding from the perspective of defending truth, freedom and dignity, and from my duty to support our Palestinian brothers and sisters, I place the international community face to face with its obligatory responsibilities requiring the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace, an end to all forms of occupation of Arab land and the implementation of relevant international resolutions. I call for immediate and significant measures to put an end to occupation, settlement activities and any alteration to the identity of occupied Jerusalem.

I call for peace that will establish a sovereign Palestinian State and achieve the security and stability long sought by the peoples of the region. On the same basis, I assure the Assembly of Egypt's full support of any course of action that Palestine decides to follow in the United Nations.

I call upon all Member States, just as they have supported the revolutions of the Arab peoples, to extend their support to the Palestinians and their endeavour to recover the full and legitimate rights of a people struggling to regain its freedom and establish an independent State of Pa lestine, based on the inalienable rights of the Palestinians.

We are determined to work to pursue all efforts of the Palestinian people, in support of them and side by side until they freely regain all rights for all segments and communities of the population.

From this rostrum and at this eminent gathering, I must address the issue that weighs heavily upon all of us, namely, the bloodshed and the human tragedy in Syria. The bloodshed must be halted immediately. That is our first concern. The blood being shed in the land of beloved Syria is far too valuable to continue to lose day and night. The brotherly Syrian people, who are dear to the hearts of every Egyptian, deserve to hope for a future of freedom and dignity. That is the essence of the initiative that I proposed in the Holy City of Mecca during the recent month of Ramadan, and which I have reiterated on subsequent occasions. It aims to avoid the worst; to check the continued suffering of the Syrian people and the development of the conflict into a full scale civil war - God forbid - with concomitant negative effects extending beyond Syria and its immediate neighbors.

Egypt, along with the three other countries involved in our initiative, has held meetings that manifested many areas of commonalities. We will continue to work to put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people and provide them with an opportunity to choose freely the regime that best represents them.

After the current regime comes to an end - the regime that is killing its own people clay and night - the Syrian people will choose, by their own free will, a regime that represents them and that places Syria in its proper position among democratic countries contributing to the common march of the Arab people based on its solid, legitimate, regional and international role

I would like to emphasize here that the initiative is open to all. It is not just the purview of its four starting parties, but is open to all who wish to positively contribute to resolving the Syrian crisis and suffering, that we are all responsible for.

All of us, the world over, must actively endeavor to put an end to the tragedy. It is the tragedy of the age, and our duty is to end it.

Egypt is committed to continuing its sincere efforts to put an end to the catastrophe in Syria under an Arab, regional and international framework that preserves the unity of that brotherly State. It would involve all factions of the Syrian people without ethnic, religious or gender discrimination and would spare Syria the danger of foreign military intervention, which we oppose. Egypt is also committed to supporting the mission of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, and to continuing the current efforts aimed at unifying the Syrian opposition and encouraging it to propose a comprehensive unified vision of an organized democratic transfer of power by measures that preserve the rights of all constituencies in Syria, and maintain their essential positions in the new Syria - like the new Egypt.

I cannot fail to reiterate Egypt's commitment to working, with the other Arab countries to ensure that the Arab nation reclaims its rightful position in the world. That is an integral component of Egypt's vision of national security and of the larger homeland extending from the Arab Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean - an area that thrives with opportunities for cooperation and constructive engagement with the entire world.

Egypt also believes that the extremely valuable contribution of the Arab nation within the wider Islamic sphere is of vital necessity in promoting joint action within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Egypt will make every effort to ensure that the next OIC conference, to be held early next year in Egypt, will strengthen mutual understanding between Islamic countries and the rest of the world and set in motion the principles of the dialogue among civilizations, by eliminating the causes of misunderstandings used by fanatics on both sides to prove, wrongly, that differences among people are great and to achieve political goals completely unrelated to the noble ideals of religions, human values or ethics.

Today more than ever, our brothers and sisters in the Sudan need the Assembly's support. The Sudan is seeking to achieve stability and development and is working to build sound and ideal relations with South Sudan. I believe that the nascent State, together with the Sudan, is ready to become a center of cooperation between the Arab world and African countries. The Sudan has made great sacrifices in its quest for peace and stability. It has committed itself to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. It was also the first country to recognize the nascent State of South Sudan. But let me be frank: it has not received the support it deserves. It is now high time for international efforts to rally in support of the Sudan and to work on settling differences between the Sudan and its neighbor to the south in order to resolve all outstanding issues.

An early success of the brotherly Somali people during the difficult transitional phase was to elect His Excellency Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as President, which is a positive step towards unity and stability after a very difficult period. I call upon the United Nations to continue to support the Somali Government's efforts to fend off those seeking to hinder its efforts to achieve stability, reconstruct State institutions and realize the aspirations of the Somali people for a better future.

The principles of justice and right are linked to achieving security and stability in the world, particularly in the Middle East. Over many long years, some have wrongfully sought to maintain stability through oppression and tyranny. Some of us have, alas, applauded their bad deeds. But now that the peoples of the region have regained their freedom, they will neither tolerate, nor permit, being deprived of their rights, by either their own leaders or outside forces.

The will of the people, especially in our region, no longer accepts the continued non-accession of any country to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the non-application of the safeguards regime to that country's nuclear facilities, especially if such action is coupled with irresponsible policies or arbitrary threats. In that regard, the international community's acceptance of the principle of pre-emption or attempts to legitimize it represents a serious matter that must be firmly confronted to avoid any tendency to promote the law of the jungle.

Cognizant of the danger that the status quo represents to the security of our important region, with its natural resources and trade corridors, Egypt stresses the necessity of mobilizing international efforts to convene the special conference on declaring the Middle East a nuclear-weapon-free zone that is also free of other weapons of mass destruction, before the end of the current year, with the participation of all concerned parties, without exception.

I should like to say very clearly that the only solution is to eliminate all nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. There is no alternative. At the same time, we also emphasize the right of all countries of the region and of the world, including Egypt, of course, to the peaceful use of nuclear energy within the framework of the NPT, with a commitment to honor their obligations in that respect and provide the necessary guarantees to the countries of the region, so as to avoid any doubt surrounding their peaceful nuclear programmes.

In our view, the concepts of justice, truth and dignity form the basis of the framework for governing international relations.

A review of international relations would undoubtedly reveal the extent of the injustice that has been inflicted upon the African continent. I do not think it necessary to enumerate all the previous pledges that have been made in the Hall to boost development and economic growth in Africa through aid and investment. The world has a responsibility to support Africa's efforts beyond mere promises and good intentions; it must provide the assistance needed for African countries to recover the treasures that were stolen from them over successive eras, the last of which being the period when some thought that supporting unjust regimes would help to achieve a false stability that protected their interests, while those regimes merely spread corruption and allowed for wealth to be smuggled outside their countries.

I am aware that the desired goals can only be achieved through the active participation of the peoples of the continent and their assumption of their own responsibilities. That is something that we as Africans are ready and willing to undertake in our quest for a better future for our countries. Today, we as Africans have to create for our continent a new set of ambitious goals that would ensure that we are on the right track towards sustainable development, the fulfillment of our aspirations for a better future and the real participation of Africa in the international order. I assure the Assembly that Egypt will continue to support its brothers and sisters in Africa, and that it is ready to cooperate with any stakeholder or party in or outside the continent to raise living standards in Africa through the exchange of expertise and successful practices.

As we contemplate the current international order, we feel that there is a need to work diligently to repair it, based on principles that would renew its legitimacy and preserve its credibility. That is a legitimate demand of peoples and nations as they seek to participate in shaping a new world and a better future for their children.

Revitalizing the role of the General Assembly as a democratic forum that expresses the will of the international community and reforming the structure of a Security Council, which still reflects a bygone era, must remain our highest priorities and must be undertaken with clue seriousness.

I would like to emphasize the need for the United Nations to give special attention to women's issues and youth issues. During the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Tehran, I proposed a new initiative to establish a United Nations body dedicated solely to youth issues, giving particular attention to education, training,employment and improving youth participation in political life. The aim is to build the capacity of future generations to achieve their aspirations.

Egypt would like to stress that the international system will not be fixed as long as we have double standards. We expect from others, as others expect from us, respect for our cultural specificities and religious points of reference. The world beyond our region should not seek to impose on us concepts or cultures that are unacceptable to us, nor should they politicize certain issues and use them as a pretext to intervene in our affairs.

What Muslims - and migrant Muslims - are experiencing in a number of regions worldwide in terms of discrimination, basic human rights violations and vicious campaigns against what they hold sacred, is unacceptable. The behaviour of some individuals in that regard is absolutely unacceptable. We reject the insults heaped upon the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad-peace be upon him - as unacceptable. We oppose those who hurl such insults. We will not allow anyone to insult the Prophet in word or in deed. It runs counter to the most basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, such practices have acquired a name today - Islamophobia.

We all have to work together. We must join hands in confronting regressive ideas that hinder cooperation among us. We must move together to confront extremism, discrimination and incitement to hatred of others on the basis of religion or race. The General Assembly and the Security Council have the primacy responsibility for addressing a phenomenon that is starting to have clear implications for international peace and security.

The obscenities that I have referred to, which are part of a recent organized campaign against Islamic sanctities, are unacceptable and require that we take a firm stand. We have a responsibility at this international forum to look into how we can protect the world from instability and insecurity.

Egypt respects freedom of expression - a freedom of expression that is not used to incite hatred against anyone and that is not directed towards a specific religion or culture. We support a freedom of expression that addresses extremism and violence and does not deepen ignorance or disregard others. As we have said before, we firmly oppose the use of violence as a means of expressing objection to obscenity and indecency.

Before I conclude, I must say that the severity and recurrence of financial and economic crises must lead us to a review of the international economic decisionmaking processes that affect the fate of peoples who have not participated directly in those processes but yet are unfortunately the first to bear their negative impacts on growth, trade, the environment and the social fabric of society, as a result of unfair trade rules and practices and conditionalities imposedon the transfer of technology and access to necessary financing for development.We urgently need a new people-centred form of global economic governance that aims at consolidating cooperation between development partners on the basis of mutual benefit and interests.

I have laid out our vision, which is shared by the Egyptian people. I have also attempted to briefly outline Egypt's views on the main issues, which is to say the vision of Egyptian youth, children, women and men, Muslim and non-Muslim, on all important questions in the Middle East, Africa and the rest of the world. From that perspective, I am sure that the United Nations is capable of assuming its intended role of effectively addressing all global and regional issues and challenges through dialogue, understanding and joint cooperation, in accordance with the principles of international law.

Post-revolutionary Egypt will spare no effort to deal sincerely with all Members of the Organization. We will always remain in the forefront of international endeavours aimed at achieving freedom, justice, social justice and dignity for all peoples, as well as security and stability for all our countries.

I look forward with great optimism, and I see the peace that we call for prevailing all over the world - a peace based on justice and conferring on all their undiminished rights, a peace that does not discriminate between people for any reason. That peace will not come about until we all cooperate, until we realize that we are all equal and share many aspirations and ambitions. That is the peace whose message I bring to to the Assembly - a peace of right and justice, stability and development, interdependence of interests and benefits, love and mutual respect. I do not believe that achieving this will raise difficulties for any of us if weextend the hand of cooperation, sincere intention and righteous work. God is our witness. We are all hopeful that we will see a better future for the world.